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PUNCH



JANUARY

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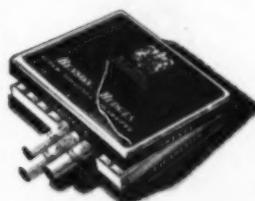
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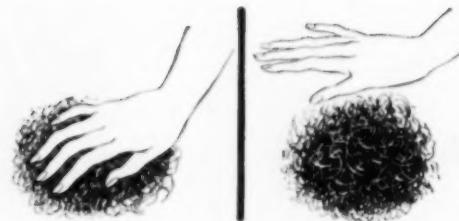


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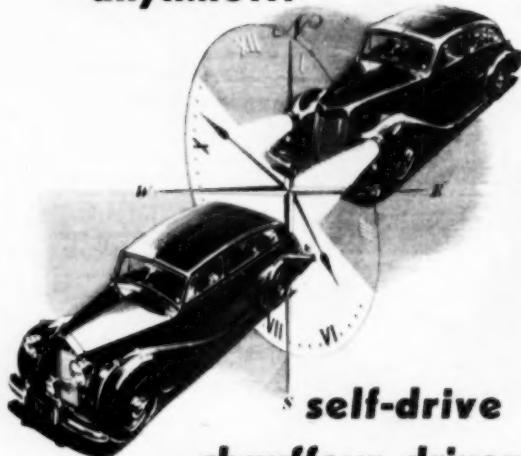
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A GAY DOG was sitting at a bar with a thoroughbred Filly. "What will you lap?" said the Dog, a very experienced lapper indeed. "Straight rum," said the Filly. "Light Hart," she added, gently tapping a well-shod foot. "Oh I suppose so," said the Dog rather foolishly, "but straight rum isn't quite-er-y know what I mean . . ." Impatiently tossing her auburn mane, the Filly explained that Light Hart is not only smooth but utterly, breathlessly *discreet*. And to cut a long story short, they drank happily ever after.

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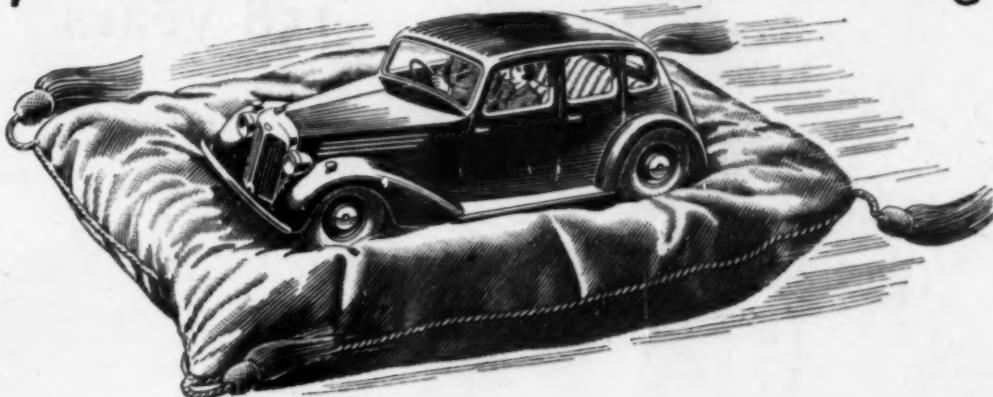
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CHARIVARIA

A METEOROLOGIST was charged at Doncaster with driving a car without due care. A forecast of "fine" would have been correct for once.

Considerable interest has been aroused by a report that a London promoter is planning to run a passenger service to seaside resorts by conch-and-four. Among those most interested are the regular travellers on the Fenchurch Street to Southend line.

"Whilst reading a volume of Mr. Churchill's war history Sandy Macpherson was playing the organ on the radio."—*Answers*

It would have been even more impressive on television.



"The new American rifle, .300 calibre and still unnamed, was demonstrated to-day.

It can fire at a rate of 700 rounds a minute, penetrate steel helmets at more than 1,200 yards and a truck at 600, and register 48 killing hits a minute on a man-sized target at 100 yards."—*Daily Express*

To say nothing of six hundred and fifty-two near-misses.

There aren't the young men eager to wrest a living from writing poetry that there were a generation ago, a publisher complains. Well, there aren't the attics.

"Out in front, towering head and shoulders over his comrades, stood Private Speakman, 6 ft. 6 in. (in his bare feet) of soldierly bearing. He looked perfectly at ease, though he told me later: 'I felt a dope.'"—*Daily paper*

This Korean boot scandal is really disgraceful.



In a leaflet advertising the facilities it provides for playing chess by telephone, the Post Office invites chess-players to take advantage of special rates for trunk-calls—three-quarters of the normal charge for the first half-hour, and half the normal charge after that. Can this be the explanation of what goes on in our local call-box?

The news that a man recently set up a new record for walking backwards prompts a correspondent to wonder what sport such a performance can possibly benefit. How about boxing?



OF CLIPPINGS

I SHOULD have liked to discuss some serious topic, such as convertibility or Graham Sutherland's portrait of Lord Beaverbrook, but a girl in Los Angeles has spent seven and a half hours in a telephone kiosk and somebody, with what Johnson called "tiresome kindness," has put a cutting about it on my desk.

Writing was easier in the Doctor's time, or in Bacon's. You could put "*Thoughts on the Late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*," or "*Instauratio Scientiarum*," at the top of a piece of paper, and get to work with a very fair chance of sticking to the subject chosen—unless Boswell or Robert Cecil blew in. Nobody put cuttings on Bacon's desk, I take it; a chit, perhaps, from Queen Elizabeth, asking for a Declaration of the Practices and Treasons of Robert late Earl of Essex and his Complices—but that could be put aside till later. You cannot so easily rid your mind of an item headed "Grates Top Wives' List of Hates," which I see has just been slipped in front of me. After grates, women dislike shopping, washing, dusting, washing-up, making beds and polishing, in that order. Cleaning windows comes eighth and clearing out drains twelfth. I should have put drains higher myself. I would rather shop than clear out drains any day, and so would Doctor Johnson unless I have sadly mistaken my man. Not that he would have been willing to make any such admission to Mass Observation, as all these women did. "Questioning," he used to say, "is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen," whereupon the Mass Observers of his day crept away with a flea in their ear—a predicament which I personally put as high as third on my list of dislikes.

This girl in the telephone kiosk did not remain there for any selfish or unauthorized purpose, such as applying cosmetics or sheltering from the rain. She was talking to her fiance, and the reason for her rather lengthy call she made plain enough. "I love him very much," she explained (so says the cutting) when she came out. That she loved him pretty well even before she went in is apparent from the fact that she took sandwiches with her, which she ate as she talked or (as one prefers to think) while he answered.

Other details about this business are not so clear. I should have liked a note or two about the queue. In England there would have been quite a lengthy queue by the time the call drew towards its close. I do not say that all the people in it would have been there all the time. Some of the earlier arrivals might well have given up and gone away after the first hour or two, preferring to deliver their messages by hand or perhaps to look for another telephone; for our people lack stamina and will rarely queue for more than a couple of hours, except to get into a theatre or keep an appointment at a hospital. But a queue of sorts there would have been; and if you had been a Mass

Observer and had walked up and down the line I dare say you would have heard one or two of the women agreeing that this was worse than making beds and hardly to be preferred to dusting. There might even, as time wore on and the sun climbed down the sky, have been cries of "What's the woman doing?" and "Tap on the glass" from some of the hotheads at the back.

In Los Angeles, for all one can gather from the cutting, there was no queue at all. One man at least there must have been outside, or the girl's explanation would neither have been made nor recorded, but his name and his state of mind are alike suppressed. I think he was a reporter. Indeed, so rapidly does news travel over there and so keen the American nose for a sensation that I am inclined to think the street was jammed with newspapermen long before the sixth hour was up, while police fought to hold back the swelling crowds and newsreel and television cameramen struggled for vantage points on nearby rooftops. Whether a fireman actually crawled to the top of the kiosk and attempted to feed the girl with hot soup by means of a rubber tube inserted through the ventilator I am not sufficiently conversant with American life and manners to say. But that her family were brought to the scene to welcome the girl as she stepped out I would bet a considerable sum—even the price of the call. (I mean the price it would have been over here; in America, where women's influence is supreme, it was five cents.)

I hope I may be showered with ticker-tape if I ever mention this girl again. She is top of my list, higher even than drains. She has stood between me and as polished an essay on Lord Beaverbrook as ever Bacon wrote. Had I lived in his time—but there, adversity has its comforts, as he himself said. Bacon may not have been bothered by cuttings, but one has to remember that he died of sleeping in a damp bed after stuffing a hen with snow, and that at least is a risk from which we are practically immune to-day. The premium Lloyd's quoted, when I rang them up, is ridiculously low. One must count one's blessings.

And here I see, just too late, are a couple of cuttings about long nails' being a sign of degeneracy in men. I shall file them.

H. F. ELLIS

S S

ON RECEIVING THE GIFT
OF A MIRROR

AMERICA, BURG, do we exchange
Tape of this gift with a big one?
WE send this gift with a
big one.
See ourselfs as others see us.
E. A. MIRRER



WHAT THE BUTLER SAW



"I remember all this when there wasn't a single house in sight on any party's programme"

THOUGHT FOR MY AUNT FANNY

I READ it in the train. I couldn't cut it out and keep it because it wasn't my paper to cut out and keep: it was the man opposite's, or the man's opposite, I'm not quite sure which. However, it stuck in my memory. If it has since come unstuck in some trivial particular, then I apologize to all concerned.

It was headed "Talking Point," was in italics at the foot of the leader column, and said this: "If you fell down yesterday, stand up to-day." That's all. I fancy that the name of H. G. Wells followed it, and I've been trying to check on this, without success. The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* only credits Wells with five memorable fragments (of which this isn't one): two are from *Kipps*, and the other three are book titles (of which *Kipps* isn't one). To me, a gifted deviser of book titles but at present without any books to go with them, this is encouraging, if beside the point.

There it was, then. "If you fell down yesterday, stand up to-day." Or, I admit it may have been, "If you fall down to-day, stand up to-morrow." I know I've got the lapse of time right, because I remember thinking that a sounder piece of advice to anyone who fell down, whether yesterday or to-day, would be to get up without delay, not just lie there for twenty-four hours risking a nasty chill and causing a crowd to collect.

What I hoped for that day in the train, and what I hope for, indeed, whenever I see a column adorned with uplifting matter of this kind, is for someone to start talking about it. That must be the point of a talking point, after all. I doubt if the man opposite had read this particular point at all; he seemed chiefly interested in the back page, and it was this which afforded me the opportunity to study the front. He was a furtive-looking man with a number of darts

medals or diplomatic insignia on his watch-chain, and a full, greyish moustache which he teased all the time with one corner of his paper. The man next to him was florid, with a pearl tie-pin and a light-grey bowler. Appearances can deceive, but neither of them looked the sort of person to fall down without suing somebody.

It was tempting to imagine a conversation between them.

"Seen this morning's talkin' point, then, Fred?" (This is the florid man who, unnoticed by me, must somehow have got a contortionist's glance at the adjacent front page; after all, I haven't been watching them all the time; I can tire of their sort of face as early as Three Bridges.)

"Do what?" says the furtive man.

"Where it says about falling down," says the other, with a faint head-movement towards the paper. He is the type which is not so much

inarticulate as wilfully incomunicative, expecting others to chip away perseveringly until meaning is laid bare.

"Fell down where?" The furtive man looks about him guardedly.

"Front page," concedes the other.

There is a good deal of this opening play. Let us skip five minutes of it and get to the stage where the furtive man has at last been guided to the foot of the leader column, and the Talking Point has been painstakingly ingested. He nods several times, concealing his bafflement behind a more than usually animated bout of moustache teasing.

"Ah," he says eventually.

"What it says there." The florid man is pressing for more spirit in the debate.

"That's right," says the other. He pauses. Then, sensing a lack of sparkle, adds "Same as where that woman was kept waiting twenty minutes for the ambulance? I call it a scandal."

"No, no." The florid man pushes his hat back in a gesture of

controlled exasperation. "It's like a thought, like."

"Do what?"

"Don't mean actually fall down."

"Oh, ah!"

"Like what it says, a talkin' point, see?"

"Oh, ah," says the furtive man. He nods several times, simulating entire comprehension, and turning, after a decent interval, to the back page again, there spots an opportunity to, in some measure, redeem himself. "Talk about falling down"—he leans sideways and speaks confidentially—"fell down proper on that one of Harold's for the three-fifteen Tuesday. Talk about sleep-walking, cor!"

"It's what I always say," says the other, with formal sympathy. "You do ever so much better sticking to greyounds."

After this the discussion languishes. And in case the reader

feels a little uncomfortable at having eavesdropped on these intimate exchanges I should perhaps remind him that they never took place. Not, at any rate, in my presence. For all I know, both men may have been leading authorities on logic, deductive and inductive respectively. All I want to say, in my rather blurred fashion, is that even if they were, they couldn't have got much more than I have out of a Talking Point like this.

As for the lady who appears in the title, she wasn't on the train at all.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

2 2

"It is unfortunately true that costs are still rising. But no Government can bring a runaway horse to a standstill in a couple of months."

Torquay Herald and Express
Try private enterprise.

GREAT AND SMALL

THE ant is very small in size,
The elephant is very great.
The second is for enterprise,
The first prefers the welfare state.

The second, standing even in sleep,
Takes notice of the smallest sound:
The first has found salvation deep
In starless chambers underground.

The one has visions of his own,
The other's course is fixed and set:
Much that the ant has never known
The elephant will not forget.

I cannot tell you why it is,
Or which produces which; but all
The organized communities
Are individually small.

But which way the advantage lies,
And which is in the higher state,
And whether merit goes with size,
I should not care to speculate.

P. M. HUBBARD





LET'S GET THIS SQUARE

MISS DORIS TEENAGE* (17), typist, of Palmers Green, said "I like American square-dancing because, well, because it's the very latest, isn't it? Me and Jim, my boy-friend, go whenever we can."

And there they were, reclining in the stalls of what was once a West End cinema and is now a B.B.C. studio. "Don't you like Jim's shirt?" Miss Teenage went on. Jim's shirt, open at the neck and worn with a yellow neckerchief tucked in at the collar, was more-or-less in the colours of the Royal Stuart tartan. No jacket concealed it. "I think he looks smashing, especially with those jeans, don't you? And my gingham dress, they're making them special now, just like they wear in Texas."

"Were you long in Texas?" I asked smoothly.

* Fictional name for an imaginary character

"Well, I've never been there," Miss Teenage admitted. "But it's cute, though, isn't it? And of course you've just got to dress proper if you want to go square-dancing, haven't you?"

I said I really didn't see why you shouldn't go square-dancing in an ordinary frock if you were a girl and a tennis-shirt and corduroys if you were a man. "Oh well," said Miss Teenage, "that just shows you don't know much about square-dancing, that's all."

Miss Teenage had something there. "Wait," I said.

The English Folk Dance Society runs enormously popular square-dances every Saturday at Cecil Sharp House. "Tell me about all this," I requested. "I hear it's the very latest thing."

Latest, they said, was hardly the word. Square-dancing as Miss Teenage knows it was introduced to the outside world, it seems, by Cecil Sharp, who encountered it in the Kentucky mountains about 1911; and, far from being new, the dances are based on figures from the folk-dances of Tudor England. Other influences have modified the dances since they first crossed the Atlantic, chiefly the French set dances like

the Quadrille and the Cotillion; and the contemporary square-dance contains figures from the English rounds and chains, and figures from the French squares, completely integrated. What is more, each new nation that sent a parcel of immigrants to the States sent with them figures from other European dances, all of which went to enlarge the repertoire of what is now thought of as the American dance.

America's great contribution has been the development of the technique of "calling." The "caller," chanting his rhythmical instructions over the music, relieves the dancers of the necessity of remembering the order of the figures themselves, and people who would never have the courage to embark on a set of Lancers, for fear of forgetting which figure follows which, can plunge happily into a square-dance in the certainty that the caller will guide their footsteps the whole way through.

"What about the tunes?" I said. "Don't tell me 'Turkey in the Straw' is an Elizabethan folk-tune."

"Well, there's no traditional music for square-dancing," I was told. "Anything with a two-in-a-bar, or four-in-a-bar, or six-eight rhythm will do—English, Irish,

or American." It seems that in America the hill-billies found playing music more difficult than dancing, and the original tunes got lost when they discovered that anything with a good lilt would go. Indeed the Kentucky square-dancers originally seen by Cecil Sharp did without music altogether, and kept time by clapping their hands, or "patting," as they called it. So there are no traditional square-dance tunes, nor traditional instruments for square-dance music; you can use anything from a lone concertina to the band with the curious tone of cornet, clarinet, big trombone, etc., *ad. lib.*

Primed with all this information, I paid another visit to the

evening, check to check, and they might never talk to anyone else at all. This is a real community dance, though, you have a go with everybody, and you just can't help getting to know one another.

"And the great thing is," he went on, "it's so easy. You just learn the basic figures, allemande, right-hand cross, do-si-do, promenade, all that, and then you only have to listen to the caller."

I said parenthetically "Promenade?"

"It's American," Miss Teenage explained scornfully.

"It is American, that's true," the caller agreed, "but we anglicize it when the chatter gets too obscure. Chatter, that's what the caller puts

Of course you can put in anything for the chatter, all that matters is getting the figures called in time so people can act on them."

"What I don't understand," I said, "is how so many expert callers have suddenly appeared as soon as this craze began."

"Well, let's face it," the caller said, "some of them aren't strictly legitimate—they've seen it or heard it done and they think they can do it themselves, but they aren't really



cinema-studio, where I found Miss Teenage and Jim flushed after an exhausting bout of "Do-Si-Do Shuffle." She said "Well, never mind where it comes from, it's American now, isn't it? Anyway, you've got to have an American caller or it's no good."

The caller, attired like Jim in a tartan shirt and blue jeans, was not of the same opinion; in spite of being one of England's leading square-dance experts he happens to be English, though he lived twenty years in Canada. "What do you think of it all?" he asked. I said it looked a lot of fun. "That's just what it is, a lot of fun," he agreed. "You know how it is with ordinary ballroom dancing, a fellow and a girl dance together the whole

time to keep the rhythm going between calling the different figures. For instance, you're doing a right-and-left grand, that's a double chain, gentlemen one way and ladies the other, and you want that to go on for four bars before you call the next figure: well, you call something like, say—

*A right to your partner, go right-and-left grand
I sold my cow, I sold my calf.
I sold them both for a dollar-and-a-half;
Now swing your partner—*

see what I mean? Well, some of the chatter wouldn't mean much over here—*Chicken in the breadpan, picking up dough*—and some of us put in something easier to understand.

qualified. But there are a number of us teaching callers as fast as we can go—they run courses at Cecil Sharp House too—and a few callers have come across the Atlantic since the boom started. And it's a boom, I can tell you. This is going to be Big Business. There are firms already selling special dresses and special shoes—"

"That's what I'm afraid of," I said unhappily.

"Of course you don't need to wear anything special at all," the caller said, "just something easy; but if folks like to dress up—well, it looks pretty, doesn't it?"

It looked extraordinarily pretty. I had to agree.

"Well, time to get the boys and girls on the floor again."

I said good-bye to Miss Teenage and Jim at the door. "Since you enjoy this so much," I said, "I wonder if I can interest you in something very much the same? It's called *Mr. Beveridge's Maggot*, and you wear white flannels with ribbons tied on your legs—"

"It sounds corny to me," said Miss Teenage. "Ribbons!" She smoothed the silk fringe on the hem on Jim's new neckerchief.

B. A. YOUNG

[*Outcast of the Islands*]

Aissa—KEIRNA

AT THE PICTURES

Outcast of the Islands—Close to My Heart

I would not have been sensible to go to *Outcast of the Islands* (Director: CAROL REED) expecting another *Third Man*, though one gets the impression that plenty of people did; the fate of anyone who makes a big success is that the simple-minded cannot understand why he should not spend the rest of his days doing the same sort of thing in the same way. Mr. REED, however, shows a determination to vary his style, an altogether praiseworthy taste for experiment with different kinds of theme and surroundings, and I think one should take the trouble to decide what he meant to do in this instance before objecting with indignation that he has failed to turn out a gripping narrative of suspense. The Conrad story, apart from the writing ("plodding prose," I see somebody has had the effrontery to call it), depends on exotic atmosphere and the feeling of obsession, and it is plain that Mr. REED has set out to produce these effects, which are in quite a different category from those excitements of crime and pursuit against the background of a modern city that have formed so much of his concern in earlier pictures. For me he has not succeeded, but I hesitate

might have come straight out of a travelogue. And so much of the film, by its very nature, has to be scene-setting: the circumstances are one main cause of the progressive degradation of Willems. His infatuation with the beautiful savage Aissa is the other, and here again the method doesn't seem to me to come off: all the elements are there—the feeling of obsessive passion ought to shimmer from the screen—but somehow they never quite reach an effective synthesis. But it's a very interesting picture, well played (though ROBERT MORLEY's Almayer is disconcertingly comic, and his little daughter is used for irrelevant moments of childish charm), and worth seeing.

Totally unimportant as a work of art and quite obviously aimed with cunning at an audience that likes to watch and think about babies, *Close to My Heart* (Director: WILLIAM KEIGHLEY) has, all the same, incidental attractions

that may keep even a case-hardened sourpuss entertained. The most difficult thing to bear is the infinitely wise, gentle and condescending manner of the director of a child-adoption agency played by FAY Bainter, an actress worthy of better things. The story deals with a young wife, unable to have a baby of her own, who gets her husband to agree to adopt one; he makes the mistake of tracing its real parents, discovering that the father is a callous murderer. All is put right at the end by a doctor's assurance that heredity doesn't mean a thing really. The details of the search, the smooth competence of GENE TIERNEY and RAY MILLAND and some pleasant light allusive dialogue should adequately beguile those disinclined to coo over the baby.

* * * * *

Survey
(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In the same London programme as *Phone Call from a Stranger*, which has some very entertaining dialogue, detail and small-part acting, is *Royal Journey*, an account of the Canadian tour of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. It's in a new colour process (Ekta) and is done remarkably well. Also in London: *Miss Julie* (12/12/51), *Three Telegrams* (2/1/52) and *The African Queen* (16/1/52).

Most interesting releases: *A Place in the Sun* (9/1/52) and *Murder Inc.* (29/8/51).

RICHARD MALLETT

[*Close to My Heart*]

Midge Sheridan—GENE TIERNEY

... TO SEE A FINE LADY ...

THE envelope, corrected in pencil, lies before me as I write.

If I had not learned from a leader in *The Times* that a cat had walked to the place from Birmingham, I should not have been so much annoyed. I presume that this creature read the ordinary sign-posts (as in the case of Highgate Hill), and that access, even by road, presents no difficulty to a reasonable mind. It should not therefore take an ordinary letter, aided by mechanical resources, so much as seven days to proceed from London to Banbury.

I thought at first that my handwriting had been the trouble, because I remembered that I had once begun a sentence with the word "Bardolatry," and the printers had turned it into "Basingstoke," which largely altered the sense I had in view. But this time it proved, on investigation, that all I had done, or left undone, was to omit beneath the word "Banbury" the rather futile amplification OXON.

So my blood boiled. I wrote to the Postmaster General:

SIR.—Pray silence a moment, and listen. Do we not hear far off the clattering of a thousand little feet, the echo of five hundred treble voices from the nursery floor? Is it too much to assert that there is one town in England, and only one town, to which in the radiant imagination of childhood all roads lead? And what is that town?

I have nothing to say against Oxon, if by this word you indicate the County of Oxfordshire. It is a county full of famous townships, and not least that one whose architectural amenities, I learn, are about to be so greatly enhanced by a new supply of gasometers. It has lent to the county its name, and has other titles to notoriety on which I need not here enlarge.

But elsewhither it surely is that we turn in dreams for the magnificent spectacle of feminine equitation that has haunted our early years—the gleam of rings on noble fingers, the tintinnabulation on exquisite footwear of tiny bells.

The old Castle of Banbury, built about 1125, was several times besieged during the Great Rebellion, and demolished shortly after. That is not your fault. The goodly Cross of Banbury was destroyed in 1602 by the Puritans. Here also you are guiltless of blame. But a new Cross (you surely must have observed) was erected in 1859, and received additions in 1914. The gasometers of Banbury are beyond praise. The most important manufactures are those of plush, shag and girth-weaving, agricultural implement making, brewing, and the baking of a kind of oblong pastry full of sweet squashed stuff, which in boyhood's happy hours we were wont to guzzle like hogs. It was familiar to the poet and dramatist Ben Jonson, rarest of mankind. There is a lively cattle-market. Early closing day.

Tuesday. Chipping Norton, 13 miles. Assessed in Domesday Book at 50 hides. Pop. 18,900. Recreations: hunting, eating, and song.

I hope I have already said enough to convince you that the Municipal Borough of Banbury (Cons. maj. 3,574) was not without a certain fame in the past, is still flourishing, and may even look forward to prosperity in the future, when the stern task that lies in front of us at home and abroad has been duly confronted, and all our noses are at the wheel.

I forgot to mention that in 1460 the Yorkists were defeated in the vicinity, wherever that may be.

Even allowing for the assumption, which I am loath to admit, that the bearers of His Majesty's Mail, uninstructed in history, blind to architecture, and ignorant of the geography of their native land, have no better means of approaching this lovely and tuneful town than by conveying their sacks astride their fathers' walking-sticks, I consider that a period of seven days is far too long for the performance of so simple a task.

I am, sir,
etc. . . .

If this letter has not yet reached the Postmaster General, it must be because I have not yet finished writing the envelope. His addresses in the telephone directory occupy about two and a half pages, and for fear of another mistake I am trying to squeeze them all in.

EVOR



DOMBEY AND FATHER

FATHER has been rediscovering Dickens lately, and it has been a testing time for all of us. Not only do we have Little Nell's grandfather for tea, but father even interferes with our lighting arrangements.

"But I can't see to do my crossword," protests mother.

"One doesn't read Dickens with a ceiling light," says father, lovingly patting his fireside lamp into the right position, putting on his slippers and filling his pipe. He liked it if there was a gale wailing and rain spattering on the windows; and I know he'd like it better still if he had a proper fire instead of fake coal made of painted buckram with a red bulb inside and a common electric bar doing the real work.

We had several bad quarters of an hour with *Pickwick*, because father did imitations. The Weller ones were anybody's guess, father making Sam sound like a bronchial Irishman of Welsh extraction; and whenever he had an Alfred Jingle turn on, father would burst into the flat talking like a machine-gun:

A dreadful night — raining in torrents — buses full up — cheeky conductress — aggravating, very."

It came as a refreshing change when David Copperfield got six of the best from Mr. Murdstone, because it toned father's noisiness down to tufts of pity; and he was softened still further by David's Dora.



John Hanney

"Poor little woman," he muttered tenderly. "Poor little girl."

Mother, who remembered Dora's housekeeping, was very annoyed.

"Little fool, you mean," she corrected sharply. "How would you like me to serve underdone mutton and leave Chinese dog kennels all over the place?"

"You are speaking of the woman I love," father reprimanded. Seeing him furtively using his handkerchief some chapters later, I realized he had suffered a loss.

Father did not possess *Dombey and Son*. Making a special trip to the library for it, he proceeded to share it with us more than generously.

Things started quietly enough. Beyond remarking that Mr. Dombey was a stuffed shirt like old Mitchell at the office, father wasn't much impressed by him. He liked little Paul, and I caught him making queer, imitative faces whenever he came across Mr. Parker's teeth.

It was the second Mrs. Dombey that caused the trouble. One minute father was quietly reading with both his slippers on, and the next he yelped like a trodden-on dog and kicked one slipper right across the room.

"Oh, what is it?" asked mother, dropping a stitch.

"This woman worries me," explained father, retrieving his slipper. "Listen to this: 'She struck her hand upon her beautiful bosom, as though she would have beaten down herself.' That's because she's going to marry a rich man. I suppose if he hadn't a bean she'd bang her head against the wall."

After fifteen minutes' peace father, saying that they really should dope the girl before she did herself an injury, treated us to: "'Her broad white bosom red with the cruel grasp of the relentless hand with which she spurned it from her.'" Father added that he didn't quite see how this worked.

Mother sighed.

"Have you got much more left

of that book, dear?" she asked. Taking no notice of this, father said presently that Mrs. Dombey was now biting her lip. Mother bit hers.

Next evening father had only just started to read when he gave a yap of dismay, having discovered Mrs. Dombey revolving a bracelet on her arm, "pressing and dragging it over the smooth skin until the white limb showed a bar of red." He went off to bed early.

In the morning mother, collecting books for a library pilgrimage, glanced at *Dombey and Son*.

"Ah! Due to-day!" she cried triumphantly. Flipping through the pages, she added "A good thing too. I see your father's just coming to the place where Mrs. D. is so annoyed that she crashes her hand on the marble mantelpiece, makes it bleed and then holds it almost in the fire. I don't think I could sit through that."

On her return from the library mother told me happily that father would have to go on the waiting list if he wanted the book again.

When father came home it was pathetic to see the way he positively smacked his lips as he set the stage for a Dickens evening. Rain was slashing at the window; wind was wailing; the electric fire was flashing round like anything. Out came the pipe and tobacco; off went the ceiling light. For the first time mother's face took on a guilty look.

"Now I feel I've been a beast," she whispered to me, as father disappeared to get his slippers.

When he came back he flopped into his chair with a happy sigh.

"I thought we really ought to own a *Dombey*, so I bought this to-day," he said, waving a new book at us.

GERALDINE BUSSEY

• •

"A live mine was washed up opposite Mr. James Linfield's Worthing seafront home on Christmas Day. Police and Navy men refused it, then accepted Mr. Linfield's grateful invitation to a party." — *Local paper*

Is the beastly thing still there?



"This looks a likely spot . . ."

A DAY IN MY LIFE

HERE is one of those stories supposed to be told by some inanimate object, this time a Wherry. It is at least a change from the more usual three-guinea watch, pound note or skein of wool. I have chosen the form because it is one I have never tackled since, at the age of nine, I was a cricket bat and caused some comment by claiming to be made of mahogany.

As I creaked off from the landing-stage on the Tiber I heard Marcellus Optimex Marcellinus say to T. Scipionicus Ahasuerus, a cross-breed, "Cometh the tide in or out, good Master Wherrymaster!" The reason I could hear this, or any of the conversations, was Ruskin's invention of the Pathetic Fallacy. Flowers grow sad; walls have ears; wherries eavesdrop. Possibly because I spent so much time eavesdropping we did not make much progress but drifted round in circles. I was not, to be honest, a very good wherry. I was a curious shape, probably because I had begun life as a raft; I leaked, both amidships and elsewhere; I needed expert oarsmanship and seldom got it, as I usually set out loaded with Roman citizens of more historical interest than skill in rowing. On a good day my complement might include Cincinnatus, Caesar and Virgil. We never worried much about anachronisms on the Tiber. Our sense of the oneness of the Past was too strong.

Marcellinus was a character from economic history who was trying to introduce sisal into the Campagna. This is why he did not realize that Ahasuerus was not a wherrymaster but a bringer of tribute from the East who had stayed on for the Lupercalia. I chuckled at the laughable error, and several yellowish wavelets came aboard. Astern, a thin, silent man robbed me of copy. I so arranged things that the stern became awash, but he remained reticent. I provisionally labelled him as a Tarquin. He looked both noble and ill-used, just the type to appeal to the hot-headed philanthropy of Lars Porsena. We passed under a bridge and, as usual, the oars caught on the piers, and the passers-by jeered. It was never a refreshing change for me to go sideways. I sighed, and the presumptive Tarquin got his spear entangled in the complications of the bridge overhead. The passers-by stopped passing by and lent right over and round under to jeer at closer range.

It must often have happened that the inanimate spectator of newsworthy events was not at the top of its own class. Did the three-guinea watch keep good time? I cannot remember, but I doubt it. Sometimes I would feel wistful when the racing barges sped by, intent on transport and indifferent to history. I might have Sulla or Julius II or Garibaldi on board; but the other barges got to the quay first. Often I had to hang



about in midstream for ages until there was room to unload. I remember that Michelangelo used to be very caustic about it, so was Jugurtha.

Owing to the lack of space and comfort few of my passengers demonstrated those manners and customs I am supposed to re-echo from the past. Occasionally a slave would make some passing reference to gladiators, or a gladiator would make a passing reference to slaves; that was all. Poets talked in exclamations, not hexameters. Rubicund Princes of the Church became green and uncommunicative. Nobody referred to food, one of the most important manners and customs you can find. A colleague of mine, who was Mithridates' camel, picked up a surprising amount of information about Oriental banquets, some of it usable only at university level. I rarely saw even a stabbing. Just occasionally an assassin would poise himself to drive hard and true into a Tribune or a Condottiere; but then one of my planks would give, and next time he would choose the embrasure of the river wall or a dark corner in an alley.

When we got clear of the bridge I took my freight several yards downstream. The Tarquin was trying to straighten the tip of his spear without losing dignity by asking anyone to hold the shaft, and Ahasuerus, still offended by Marcellinus' gaffe, was maintaining and even increasing his injured silence. Nothing makes things harder for the historian than injured silences. Hoping that something of interest might be happening on the opposite bank, I edged across and dislodged a slim youth from a skiff. It was Shelley. I had never cared for him as a passenger because he was apt to leap out and swim off ahead with a rapidity that made me appear to move backwards. Now, draped round the offside oars, he was a hampering element and did not make up for it by any of those *aperçus* that make the conversation of poets worth reporting. I turned into the quay, and was pleased to notice that, while a good deal of paint was scraped off me, even more skin was scraped off him.

Up and down the turbid river I plied for hire all day. As the sun set, lights appeared in the Imperial Baths, the Mediæval castles, the Renaissance palaces. Still I plied on. It was a ceaseless and unprofitable trade. At midnight, when this specimen day ended, I had gone unhired for three-and-three-quarter hours. I was tied up for the night, a dead loss to my owners and only a mildly picturesque addition to the amenities of the Eternal City.

I claim that this is one of the most realistic, and honest contributions to this branch of literature ever made, and I release myself from serving it further for seven years.

R. G. G. PRICE

2 2

Safety First

"When the general readings begin to drop no matter what you do, then you are warned well in time that engine efficiency is falling. This early attention saves money in valve replacement and petrol as well and may well prevent serious trouble such as starting."—*Evening Standard*



"Moreover, it keeps my mind off the food."

FROM MY RURAL PEN

TH'bull be took bad, says old Sam—wunnot fancy
is foddler,

Ah be oop wi' un nightly from wimpay to dimpay
Ah be—

With a footnote?—a-off'rin' 'im ale mixed wi' henbane
an' duck-eggs:

'E might swaller a drop—though it sounds pretty
awful to me.

When frumitty's cut an' Ah've carted th'moock—
heaven help me—

For a-mulchin' o' Mazed Martha's acre, an' spudded
th'grupp,

Ah'll be off to th'Maister t'tell 'im owd beast be
a-sinkin':

Well, Maister, Ah'll say—*shall I batter away or
give up?*

Well, Maister, Ah'll say, sithee here now, Ah'll say,
Ah'll say, Maister—

*Get on with it, man—Ah'll say, bull be a-goin'
down 'ill,*

Aye, 'Erbert's—no, wait a *bit*—Thunderer's ate 'is
last oil-cake—

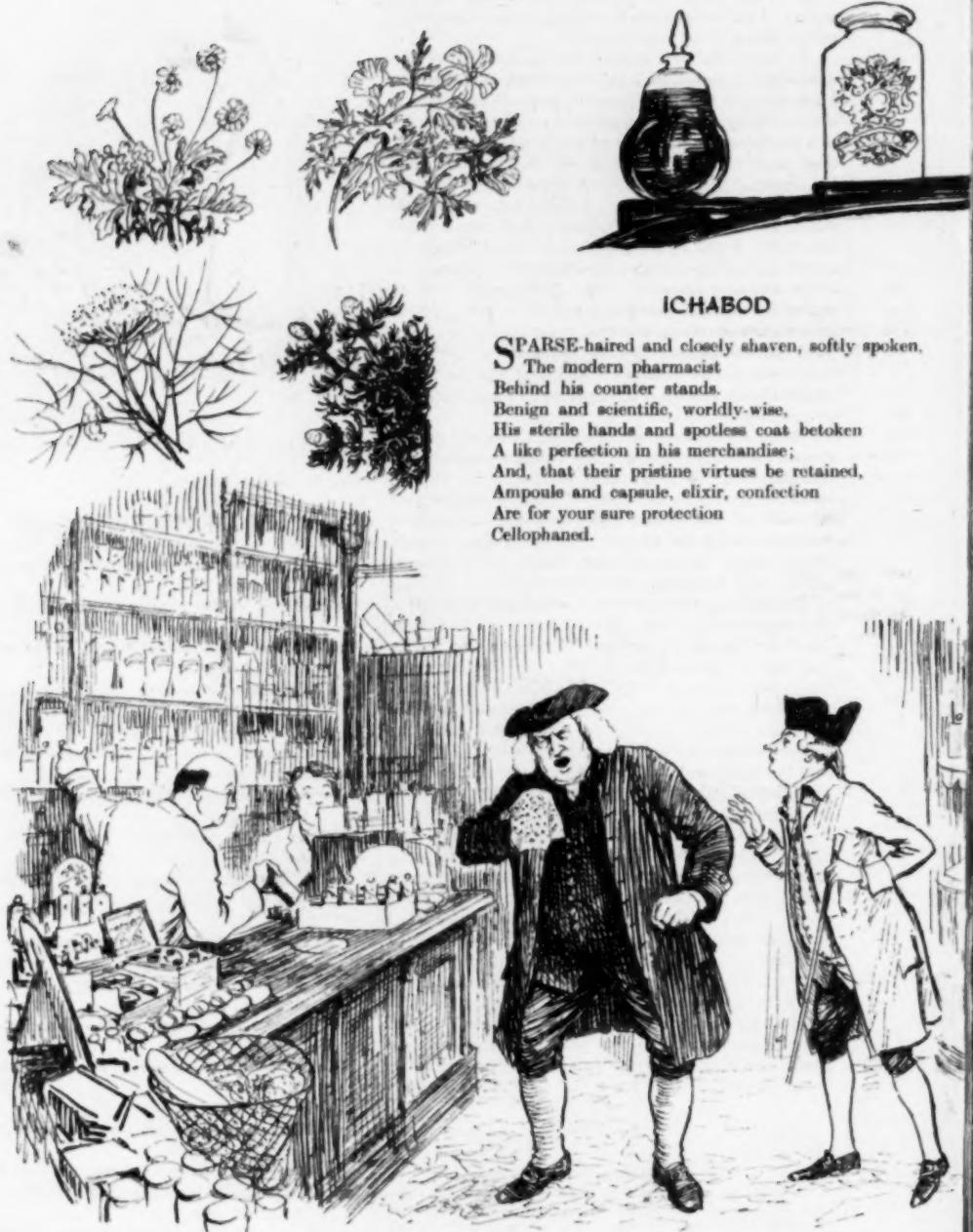
*Or do they eat those?—'e'll 'ave left us by dimpay,
'e will.*

Aye, Maister, Ah'll say, it's a road we mun all on us
foller—

Bull, farmer or frumitty-flower must wither an' die,
An' Ah says to thi face that thoo's mazed if tha thinks
to avoid un—

And if ever I tackle another of these, so am I.

T. S. WATT



SPARSE-haired and closely shaven, softly spoken,
The modern pharmacist
Behind his counter stands.
Benign and scientific, worldly-wise,
His sterile hands and spotless coat betoken
A like perfection in his merchandise;
And, that their pristine virtues be retained,
Ampoule and capsule, elixir, confection
Are for your sure protection
Cellophanned.



For this much thanks. Yet may men grieve to see
That from the chemist's arts
The mystery of the master-craft departs
And Medicine's cheated of its poetry.
Where now the rare medicaments that charmed
Our great pre-scientific ancestors?—
Which, if they failed to cure, but seldom harmed
(Save Antimony and the Hellebores).
What Arabella in her crinoline
Would soil her lips with Antihistamine?
Would Dr. Johnson subjugate his pride
And bronchially demand Sulphonamide?
Would Byron condescend to save his skin
By sending out for Chloromyctin?

Yet lingers on the poetry and the grace
In this unlikely place.
The chemist's face
Is tinted, as the softly-coloured light
Streams from the carboys in their hallowed site;
While on the drawers and pots around the shelves
The sweet nostalgic names reveal themselves—
Aloes and Cassia, Gentian, Lavender,
Mallow and Chamomile, and Sandalwood and Myrrh,
Saffron and Cinnamon, Clove and Feverfew,
Absinthe, Angelica and Rhubarb and Rue,
Fruit of the Fennel, fragrant Orris Root—
These but a few of many that salute
The leisured past, and tarry with us still,
Evoking by their names a bygone grace
And chiding us who fill
Our unromantic frames with Phenobarb.,
And Bismuth Carb.,
And Acetyl Salicyl.



E.H. Shepard



A MAGIC CARPET FOR READERS

MORALISTS should consider the positive contributions of irascibility to the common good. So much lasting benefit has come out of them that impatience, pugnacity and plain bad temper cannot in fairness be dumped entirely on the wrong side of the fence. Carlyle and the London Library are a case in point. With his "Cromwell" on the stocks, Carlyle was painfully collecting material in the Reading-Room of the British Museum, fretting at its inevitable delays and longing to get at his sources in the peace of his own study. One afternoon in 1839 he came straight from the Museum to tea with Lady Stanley of Alderley, and to a distinguished company aired his rage at the intolerable position of the British scholar, whose library facilities compared disgracefully with those of his foreign colleagues. Carlyle's friends were hardened to such outbursts, but this time he meant business, and a group of leading men, including Gladstone, were impressed by his proposal for a library in London which would cater mainly for the serious reader and would not attempt to compete with the popular libraries.

The idea was not completely new. Half a century earlier a library with the same name had been started in Ludgate Street. Its prospectus declared its intention of containing "all those great works in science and literature which it is difficult for individuals to procure, as well as every other publication of taste and entertainment which has

no tendency to mislead the judgment or corrupt the heart." Such ambiguous piety evidently proved uncommercial, for the library is believed to have amalgamated soon afterwards with the Westminster Library in Jermyn Street.

The letters which Carlyle wrote at this time to W. D. Christie, the young barrister who was tying up the practical issues for him, are full of daemonic energy; one imagines that to keep him quiet an equal number of famous men would have been willing to launch a scheme of greatly inferior merit. "Lord Northampton were my favourite too, I think; but any Lord will do: it is a mere ensign; 'British flag flying at the royal masthead.' All depends upon the gunners! Fire away!" The gunners fired like anything, a meeting was called, and in the single extemporary speech of his life Carlyle powerfully described the need for a new library. The British Museum was all very well, but many readers were barred from it by geography and their hours of work; the circulating libraries

were by nature obliged to purvey rubbish for the million. Others spoke too, Monckton Milnes making the best point when he said that Gibbon had been forced to spend £7,000 on books while he was writing his *Decline and Fall*. Agreement was reached, and early in 1841, beating Mr. Punch by a very short head, the London Library started life in two rooms at 49 Pall Mall, with five hundred subscribers (only fifteen of them women) who paid an entrance fee of six pounds and an annual subscription of two, with three thousand books and a committee that included Gladstone in a flourish of eminent names.

The main lines of the policy to which it still holds were laid down at the beginning. There was to be open access to the shelves; all books, irrespective of value, could





be taken away; members were encouraged to suggest additions; the Library was to aim at providing students with the most important works on a wide variety of subjects, but particularly history and philosophy; and no new novel was to be bought until six months after publication. In those days, however, the purchase of new books was decided by the Committee; now, except in rare cases, it is done by the Librarian alone. This is obviously a better plan, since the whole point is to get books without delay to those who need them.

The London Library grew quickly on a catholic basis. In the letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle there is a nice entry under 1843 describing how, finding everything she wanted was out, she took an armful of French novels and in a pusillanimous moment signed "Erasmus Darwin" in the ledger. Writers and scholars flocked to the Library as they discovered its value.

Thackeray audited the accounts, legacies of books began to arrive from private collections, and by the affectionate consent of the literary world the Library became a social institution and a kind of club. In 1845 it moved to 14 St. James's Square, buying the house in 1879 and since then adding to its premises and acquiring a neighbouring site for future expansion. All this has been done by the members without the help of grants, a splendid achievement of private enterprise. The more recent developments are due largely to the drive and sagacity of the late Sir Charles Hagberg Wright, Secretary and Librarian from 1893 to 1940.

In the memory of the oldest assistant, Mr. F. J. Cox, who reigns at the reception desk after seventy years in the Library's service, is a duchess who used to come on horseback to change her books. One gets the pleasant feeling in the big Issuing Room on the ground

floor that nobody would be much surprised if that still happened; but the duchess would find a good deal changed.

There are now over half a million volumes in stock, so carefully indexed that the Library's catalogues are regarded as works of reference all over the world. You can ask at the reception desk for the books you want, or you can go browsing among the shelves, traversing so many steel ladders that you begin to think you are in the engine-room of a liner. Subjects are clearly marked. When the Library was young it divided all knowledge into History, Theology, Literature and Science; and Science—although the saving little words "and Miscellaneous" have been added to it—still carries under its omniscient umbrella such oddities as Ostrich-farming, Pawnshops, Laughter, Witchcraft, Pig-sticking, and Longevity. At the reception desk diplomats with elephantine

memories deal not only with members but also with a flood of requests from those in the country. Even at "Please send me a good book on needlemaking in Stepney in the eighteenth century" eyebrows scarcely rise.

You can, if you wish, spend all day in the warm and comfortable Reading Room on the first floor. Only two things are missing, tea and permission to smoke, but there is no veto either on vacuum-flasks or snuff. In the same room a generous stand of periodicals covers the trends of current thought both at home and abroad. Collectors' pieces are outside the Library's terms of reference, and therefore few manuscripts are included, but a number of notable early books are stored in safes. These special treasures were fortunately out of London when a whole wing was destroyed in the blitz—which only closed the Library briefly. That all but the rarest can be borrowed speaks well for the members, whose conduct is on the whole admirable, although in an official list of their occasional malpractices is the deplorable case of a book flung in deep disapproval into the still deeper Atlantic.

In this country there is nothing quite like the London Library. Men and women of letters have learned to bless its wisdom, its range and its courtesy. The membership is now over five thousand. Since 1926 the subscription has been unchanged at four guineas, for which a town member can take ten books at a time, and a country member fifteen. As this article goes to press, however, a meeting is pending which will consider an increase to cover the general rise in expenses. The subscription may well be raised to six guineas. If it is, the Library will still remain absurdly good value.

ERIC KEOWNS



FAMILIAR WITH THE TONGUE



WILSON was hemmed in near the door. He had a glass of sherry in one hand and a sticky piece of toast with a sardine embedded in jelly on it in the other. So many people were in the room that he had to hold both at shoulder height.

"This is a very glossophaginous party," he said, smiling in what he hoped was a warm, slightly cynical manner.

He had come across the word that morning, looking idly through a technical dictionary while waiting in an office. It was between "glossohyal" and "glossopharyngeal." It meant, he read, "obtaining food by the use of the tongue." Its possibilities for use in conversation struck him immediately, since he was due with his wife at a party that evening. There would be a crowd of people talking as fast and as loudly as they could and at the same time consuming all their host's food and drink at a tremendous rate. Typical glossophagines, he thought. He rehearsed the pronunciation a few times under his breath, imagining himself throwing it into the conversation casually. Somebody would ask him to explain. He would say, gravely, but with the hint of a smile at the corners of his mouth, "It means obtaining food by the use of the tongue. A word," he would continue through the burst of laughter, "which could equally well be applied to a number of distinguished after-dinner speakers." He would say this urbanely.

As soon as he had said it, in fact, a feeling of misgiving struck him. Was the word "glossophaginous," or was it possible that the dictionary had, in fact, said "glossophaginic?" He gazed anxiously at

the girl to whom he was talking. She looked back at him apprehensively.

"Excuse me," she said, quickly. "I must speak to Bobby," and vanished into the throng.

He was left holding his sardine and sherry. Between two groups he found an ash-tray and put his pipe in it. Turning round, he jostled a grey-haired, smartly dressed woman who smiled at him.

"It's a crush, isn't it?" she said, over her shoulder.

"Oh, yes," Wilson said, gaily, "but it's always the same at these glossophaginic parties."

"I know," she said. "They are awful, aren't they?"

Gloomily eating his sardine, Wilson decided that he had been rather reckless in the use of the word. He had thrown it away, as if it were a perfectly ordinary one, the normal small change of conversation. What he had to do was create an opening and then bring it out, like a plum from a cake. He was deciding that he had never seen a cake with a plum in it when a young woman with long, blonde hair touched his arm. She looked about nineteen.

"I've seen you before somewhere," she said.

Wilson instantly narrowed his eyes into what he felt was a humorously quizzical look.

"Have you?" he said, musically. "I'm sure I haven't seen you because I should certainly have remembered it." He looked at her suavely. "Let me get you something to eat," he said, laying the groundwork. He intercepted a passing plateful of small pieces of food and lowered it in front of her.

"They look like specimens,"



she said, selecting with delicate fingers.

Wilson cocked his head on one side, courteously amused.

"Specimens?" he said.

"Yes." Her pink tongue flicked round her lips. "I'm working in a museum, you know. The latest thing is to bury insects in plastic. That's why I said those things in jelly look like specimens." She gazed at him with wide eyes, still chewing.

"I see," said Wilson, slowly, holding her eyes with his, "that you're a glossophagine."

To his consternation she blushed.

"Oh, no," she said. "I'm just tired, that's all. I don't very often come to parties, only I'm on holiday and Charles has taken me to lots. I'm not used to late nights. Can you see any shadows under my eyes? I suppose I'm not used to it. I suppose you go to parties all the time. You must get used to it. I expect I look awful and that's why you thought that," she finished breathlessly.

"No, you look very nice," said Wilson, taken aback.

"I look a fright, I can tell," she said. He got rid of the plate and picked up his pipe again. When he turned round she had gone. He saw her golden hair two groups away. She was probably looking for Charles.

Another woman, with that studiously bored look that people wear when they don't know anybody in the room, was sitting next to a settee, cut off in a corner by the arm.

Wilson edged his way over to her and offered her a cigarette. With a slight bow he said "I never smoke them myself, but I always carry some for those who do." She arched her eyebrows. "I don't know a soul here," said Wilson. "I thought you looked rather lonely too."

"I'm just waiting to go home," she said. "I hate parties. I'm not used to them."

"Oh?" He leaned forward, careful to get just the right amount of charming query into his voice. "And where's home?" he asked.

"Shepton Mallet," she said.

"You aren't familiar with these



"Would you care to make up a four?"

glossophaginic parties then?" said Wilson casually.

She took her cigarette away from her lips.

"What on earth does glossophaginic mean?" she asked.

Wilson savoured the moment. He took out his matches and struck one. Whimsically he watched the flame, then shot an amused glance at her from under the eyebrows.

"Glossophaginic," he said. He applied the match to the bowl. "It means——"

She stood up.

"Oh, there's my husband," she cried. "I must go. We've a long drive. Good-bye. Thank you for the cigarette." She brushed past him and knocked the matches out of his hand.

After the party and on the way down the escalator Wilson said "I'm fed up with these glossophaginic parties, aren't you?"

His wife was squinting into a hand mirror. "What parties?"

"It's a word meaning obtaining food by the use of the tongue," he said.

"What's it called?" Judy said. "Gloss what?"

"Glossophaginic," Wilson said.

"Obtaining food by the use of the

tongue." He caught a glimpse of her expression behind the mirror. "It's a joke," he said. "All those people eating and talking. Getting food by the use of the tongue."

"But you didn't eat a thing," Judy said. "I saw you."

"Look," said Wilson, "it's funny, isn't it? Glossophaginic, a technical word. It means frogs and chameleons. People at a party all eating and earning their food by talking, using the tongue."

They came out on to the platform.

"I don't think a joke's funny that takes all that explaining," Judy said.

As the train coming in drowned their conversation Wilson thought of a reply. When they got out he would catch hold of Judy's arm and, in a wryly resigned tone, he would say "Ah, well, I suppose I'm a Danny Manqué."

2 2

"The meeting was held in the Cabinet room, and the President took his usual place in the middle of the table, with the Prime Minister opposite him."

The Times

Can General Eisenhower do this?



AT THE PLAY

On Saying Boo to the Right Goose

HAVING learned to leave the dead cat, the empty bottle and even the decrepit egg at home, we have come a long way in our behaviour at the play from the sterner code of the eighteenth century, when the upper galleries would express their displeasure by demanding a hornpipe in the middle of *Hamlet*, while the occupants of the grander seats drew their swords and got down to the serious business of wrecking the theatre.

Those were the uncompromising days when so decorous an old party as Lord Mansfield could lay down the inalienable prerogative of an audience to give the players the works. "Every man that is at the playhouse," he pronounced, "has a right to express his disapprobation instantaneously, according as he likes either the acting or the piece." The sturdy burghers of that period required no such encouragement. A little later Kean met repeatedly the terrifying pandemonium described by Lamb in his essay "On the Customs of Hissing at the Theatres," where the house was "filled with all sorts of disgusting sounds, shrieks, groans, hisses, but chiefly the last, like the noise of many waters, or that which Don Quixote heard from the fulling-mills, or that wilder combination of devilish sounds which St. Anthony listened to in the wilderness."

We have come a long way from all that, but still we behave pretty badly. No experience is more deeply uncomfortable than the first night that is going wrong. The initial hint of trouble is something felt, not heard, a psychic communication passing through the whole theatre. Next, in the stalls, hesitant island coughs develop quickly into acute general inflammation of the lungs, programmes rustle, whispers unashamedly become speech, until the ugly moment, not now long delayed, when the opening salvo bursts from the gallery. Perversely this is a relief, breaking the tension, but for actors strung to concert-pitch it must be brutal.

To my mind it is not so much that boozing is objectionable as that, almost invariably, it is directed to

the wrong targets. You cannot fairly blame an actor for appearing in a bad play. He may have been out of work for months, and he is only human to hope that what appears on paper to be the ramblings of an imbecile will by some miracle take better shape in action. It is not for him to assess dramatic quality, nor is it for the producer, alike engaged to make what he can of given material; judgment is the job of the author, the manager, and to a lesser extent the amorphous army of financial backers. These are the men at the controls, who from time to time insult the public taste with plays which any nursery school would have condemned out of hand. They are the people who should face the music, but with the exception of the tyro author caught on the hop they never do. There have been several first nights during the last few months on which, if the incompetents responsible had been in the front line at the curtain instead of their innocent casts, I should not only have wanted to shake Lord Mansfield by the hand but should also—if such a thing were still possible—have gladly sent out for a dozen eggs.

Recommended

John Gielgud's *Much Ado About Nothing* (Phoenix) easily tops the bill. *Colombe* (New) is medium Anouilh, vitally miscast but interesting. Jack Hulbert in *The White Sheep of the Family* (Piccadilly) should amuse all ages.

ERIC KEWES





AT THE OPERA

Wozzeck (COVENT GARDEN)

TO the English opera-goer ALBAN BERG's *Wozzeck* has for a quarter of a century been something of a legend. It has had wide success on the Continent, but here has existed only as a few broadcasts, one or two concert performances and a couple of gramophone records. It has been labelled "atonal," with all that that implies of the terrifying cerebrations of Schönberg and the "twelvetone" school; while MR. ERNEST NEWMAN has gloomily advised all who hear it to "concentrate mainly on the drama and let the music, mostly atonal, take hold of him as and when it can."

Operas have been written on almost every imaginable theme—love, hate, tyranny, redemption, mirth, vengeance, fantasy. *Wozzeck* is the opera of loneliness, hopelessness and heartbreak. It is not a work to make the tears of sentiment flow, as they flow for *La Bohème* or *Madam Butterfly*. It is of tragic grandeur, and its atonalism is a bogey neither hideous nor incomprehensible. It is, in fact, hardly a bogey at all, being little more than the chromaticism of Wagner and Strauss carried to the limit with admittedly strange but often exquisite results.

Wozzeck is a soldier in early nineteenth-century Germany, when victory in the Napoleonic wars had served only to rivet heavier chains on the poor. *Wozzeck* has nothing

in the world save the wretched harlot *Marie* by whom he has had a child. To earn a little extra money he works as batman to his *Captain*, a selfish hypochondriac; and a *Doctor* uses him as material for medical experiments. Their thoughtless inhumanity and the misery of his lot cause his mind to become unhinged. *Marie*, dazzled by the splendid physique and smart uniform of the *Drum-Major*, is unfaithful to *Wozzeck*, and the *Captain* and the *Doctor*, meeting him in the street, twit him with her infidelity. The one spark of light in his life is extinguished; he takes *Marie* to a forest and kills her by the light of a blood-red moon. Later, in terror at his crime, he drowns

himself in a pool, crying that even the moon has betrayed him, and that the waters are blood.

Both BERG and GEORGE BÜCHNER, who wrote the play more than a century ago, were young men at the time of the creation of *Wozzeck*; and it has the incandescence that comes only from the flame of youthful genius.

Whence they derived their insight into the human heart is a mystery; how BERG has infused his highly intellectualized score with such intensity of feeling is another. Each of the fifteen scenes is cast in a different musical form—Suite, Sonata, Fugue, Variations, Passacaglia. The musical organization that can weld such variety into a satisfying whole is something to marvel at.

The performance on the first night left little to be desired, apart from unclear delivery of English words by German-speaking members of the cast—which was brilliantly led by MARKO ROTHMULLER and CHRISTEL GOLTZ. The supporting cast, notably PARRY JONES as the *Captain*, were excellent, and the orchestra under ERICH KLEIBER, who directed the world première of the opera in Berlin in 1925, surpassed itself in its playing of this magical and intensely difficult score. It is sincerely to be hoped that *Wozzeck* may become part of the permanent Covent Garden repertoire now that this initial and highly successful effort has been made.

D. C. B.





"They built them to last in those days, didn't they?"

THE TRUTH ABOUT JARGON

NOTHING, I suspect, infuriates me more than the periodic attacks launched by certain literary types against the stock-in-trade language of the scientist, the economist and the Civil Servant. Fresh from a tremendous tussle with a poem by (say) Eliot, Pound or Edith Sitwell their eye lights on some eminently sensible, even beautiful, scientific term in *Hansard* or the transactions of the British Association, and they leap into the correspondence columns in defence of the King's English. No sooner have they decided what is meant by some such verbiage as "Emma-coloured ears," than they laugh their heads off at "decasualization," "frustrated exports" and other terminological inventions.

Now I write as a humble economist, and I urge these hotheads

to curb their cyclical propensity to abuse the language of my craft. Let me tell them that the effective demand for and marginal efficiency of really sound jargon is extremely high, that we economists do not intend to be bludgeoned into any deviation from the accepted trend, and that unless some bilateral agreement can be arranged we shall fight for our rights by every means, weighted and unweighted, in our power.

To the ordinary, clear-headed and unbiased reader I will put a series of propositions. Which, in your view, is a more suitable term to describe "a currency of which certain countries have earned more than they can willingly spend in the country whose currency it is"—the *soft currency* of the economist or the *alchemist-bolched lucre* of the literary

giant? Which? In my opinion *soft currency* is admirable. The juxtaposition of "soft" and "currency" is startling, evocative, memorable: one thinks automatically of money with leaden feet, of money dinted by thousands of speculating eyeteeth, of milled edges smoothed by file and penknife, of unready money. *Soft currency* is charming and comprehensible. *Alchemist-bolched lucre* sounds nothing like a non-convertible currency and is insufferable.

Now look at *stockpiling*. This term describes "the purchase by the United States for stock of raw materials which are not available or are not available in sufficient quantity from its own resources." It was coined by economists shortly after the war as a variant of "hoarding" and as a euphemistic compliment to America. Stock-

piling has a narrative simplicity, a full-blooded Saxon thrust of vowels: it conjures up a picture of vast mounds of uranium, rubber, tin, baked beans, comics, district attorneys and gold. I don't know what the literary giants would put in its place—probably something as nasty as *squirrelled nest-eggs* or *steel-vaulted combings*. Eugh!

Even our simplest and most popular terms are targets for abuse, even *disinflation* and *reflation* which merely imply "the return to 'equilibrium' from an inflationary or deflationary state of affairs—equilibrium being defined very roughly as a stable situation in which prices and wages do not tend to move much either way, in which unemployment is limited to the natural amount required for mobility of labour, etc., and in which purchasing power does not at any rate rise more than in relation to a general increase in production." I will not try to analyze the beauty of *disinflation* and *reflation*. They are gentle, ascetic words: they combine a charming hint of scholarship and bookishness (*fla.*) with the strong sense of discipline suggested by the final "*shun*." They are precise, melodious and utterly reliable, and I, for one, never see or hear them without experiencing a most pleasurable light-fingered strumming up and down my spine.

I should like to reveal to you the delicate subtlety and robust decency of such terms as *unrequited exports*, *multilateralism*, *liquidity preference*, *inconvertibility*, *Sterling Area*, *frictional unemployment*, *blocked balance*, and so on, but my development area is controlled and restricted. Perhaps I have already said enough to convince you that the mother tongue is quite safe in the keeping of the economists. And perhaps the inveterate-mouthed trouble fakirs will now shut their kapok-crammed traps.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

"Impressions of Parliament" will be resumed next week with an account of the opening debates of the new session.

TITLE DEEDS

PARKING his vizor, Geoffrey of Anjou
Picked up his cap and put a broom-leaf badge in it,
While someone present shouted out "*Plantagenet!*"
And Other Ranks delightedly guffawed.

This much from infancy one always knew,
But Angevin research reveals no clue
Whether the nickname tended to bewilder
Oxonian-evacuee Matilda,
Who (though her men completely overawed
Knight, baron, abbot, friar, vassal, churl)
Was never absolutely sure, poor girl,
Whether she ought to answer to Matilda
Or Maud.



"Yes, quite a cute little flat for a party."

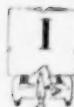
BOOKING OFFICE

Through a Glass Darkly

I AM not quite sure what the expression "Dead Sea Fruit" really means, but I feel it sums up the theme of four new books, all of which deal with dreams turning sour. We live in the trough of a great wave of optimism, and both realist and allegorical writers tend to rub our noses in the fact that the nineteenth-century hope has turned into the twentieth-century fear. This half-truth has been over-emphasized. Things are not as bad as all that, though they certainly lack the rosy glow of early Wells. Self-pity has produced art before now, but always a partial kind of art, an art that falters. Tested against the promise, our civilization is dying; tested against history, it has something to be said for it. I wish somebody would say it.

The typical figure of modern fiction is the disappointed Communist or Capitalist. He is usually materially much better off than his ancestors but spiritually poorer. He is also apt to have had an unhappy childhood, to be an unsuccessful lover and to be frustrated in his work. This is the century of totalitarianism, gas-chambers, mass-production, monotony, pulp-literature and neuroses. It is also the century of penicillin, practical social conscience, an increasingly widespread and discriminating interest in the arts, and any number of mountains removed by faith. If optimism is superficial, pessimism is lazy and self-indulgent.

Mr. H. J. Kaplan's *Anywhere Else* is about an American delegate to a European Economic Conference who pursues a dream through a fantastic evening which ends in a frowsy hotel with an Arab girl, while her



"But you did say white tie, didn't you?"

drug-maddened lover waits with a gun on the stair. I did not read Mr. Kaplan's last novel, which was very well received, but I found this book pretentious, long-winded and filled with a sense of accidie that made me want to kick the characters in the pants, an unfashionably healthy reaction for which I apologize. Mr. Kaplan has so much talent that it is infuriating to find it squandered in the service of fashion.

Barbary Shore is a more impressive book, partly because Mr. Norman Mailer writes with the full range of the language; but its wan optimism (like Koestler's) carries less conviction than its full-blooded and detailed pessimism. Its fantastic setting for the final argument between the disillusioned Communist and the representative of an allegorical F.B.I. makes the hard-headed reasoning unconvincing. Mr. Mailer is a writer of very great promise, and even some of his most heavily over-written purple patches have a gleam of genius that redeems them. His incidental coarseness, while probably helping his sales, detracts from the effect of his political discussion.

Mr. Robert Westerby is a realistic writer who produces very efficient and readable accounts of the fringes of the London underworld; his straightforward descriptions have the effect of satirizing Capitalism from the underside. *In the Money* is a fast-moving novelette about gamblers, spivs, the sins of society and the resemblances between shooting dice and high finance. It is very well done. What limits it is its implied assumption that this is the whole of the truth.

Miss Mary McCarthy illuminates the dark side of civilization through social comedy. *Cast a Cold Eye* is a collection of stories and sketches of which the last three are autobiographical in form. Equally at home in an experimental review or a glossy magazine, Miss McCarthy is a professional writer of such skill that her criticism of society is probably all the more effective for being invisible to a good many of her readers, who will probably take these deadly tales at their face value. However, even if one is sufficiently proud of one's sophistication to express admiration of her as a social solvent, it is difficult to avoid the feeling that the total effect is rather negative. It is all very funny and poignant, amusing or terrifying according to the reader's depth of awareness. Yet one is left with nothing except a vague feeling that for anybody to be able to write as well as this is itself rather cheering.

Literature can be a mirror for life and a guide to conduct. We shall never behave better until we know more. The argument that everything is so dreadful that action is useless ignores the fact that a large number of people successfully work on the assumption that something can be done and is therefore worth doing. This is not a question of Capitalism versus Communism but of action versus paralysis, of Life versus Death.

R. G. G. PRICE

God or Godolphin

Sturdy Protestantism has always suspected the relations of over-bearing "directors" and young and beautiful penitents; but few of the extant stories of the abuse of religious confidence are as remarkable as the pietistic romance in which *John Evelyn and Mrs. Godolphin* played the principal rôles. From about 1669, when his attractive young wife was having her ninth child in the surroundings of her husband's famous landscape gardens, Evelyn, aged forty-nine, was looking for a spiritual affinity (charm essential) among the Maids of Honour at Charles II's court. He found Margaret Blagge, already engaged to "Bacon Face" Godolphin whose foreign commitments kept him busy, and for nine years supervised her religious welfare, keeping her plied with suggestions that her spiritual progress was incompatible with wedlock. Mr. W. G. Hiscock's confutation of Evelyn's disingenuous "Life" of his victim is masterly. We shall have to forget the forensic skill with which the philanderer is handled before we can enjoy even the Diary or "Sylva" again.

H. P. E.

Scottish Museum

Admirers of the old-fashioned "Miscellany" will derive most pleasure from *It's an Old Scottish Custom*, by Mr. Neil McCallum, who conducts us on a haphazard tour round his collection of Scottish curiosities with comment which is at its best when least ambitious. Many of the exhibits are familiar, but there are some recondite specimens of Scottish festivities, cookery and character; there are also a number of unfamiliar quotations whose source the balked reader must seek elsewhere. Mr. McCallum is sound on malt whisky, on the bogusness of Highland Games and on girl pipers; less so on Scott, the iniquities of Highland lairds and the importance of "Hugh MacDiarmid." He is wise enough to make excellent use of those ringing place-names which sound pibrochs in every Scottish railway time-table, but allows himself some lapses of fact; for instance, there are surely more than 277 Munros (individual summits above 3,000 feet), nobody speaks (or should speak) of Ben Suiven, and Canisp is hardly a "monolith." And Will Fyffe, if worth quoting, is worth quoting correctly.

H. B.

Before Bayreuth

From the great Burrell collection of Wagneriana comes a mass of *Letters of Richard Wagner*, with illuminating comments by the editor, Mr. John N. Burk. Most are pre-Cosima and throw a new, searching and welcome light upon the great composer's relations with his first wife, his involvements with Jessie Laussot and Mathilde Wesendonck and his early artistic struggles while "Tannhäuser," "Rienzi," "Lohengrin" and "Tristan" were on the stocks. Even the non-musician can piece together the character of the man from these outpourings—literally outpourings for there are over five thousand words in one letter to Minna alone—realize

his violent passions, unstable balance, fury when his wishes were curtailed in the slightest degree, but, with it all, blazing belief in his own genius. His protestations of devotion, self-pity when neglected or hurt and constant commutation between despair and delight may seem to loom larger than life, but then so does some of his music.

J. D.

Survival of the Fittest

From the snowy wastes and primitive backwoods life of his previous novel, "Truck of a Cat," to a romantic childhood at an American school seems, at first glance, to be a big leap for an author to take; but after reading *Tim Hazard* one is not so sure. As Mr. Walter Van Tilburg Clark demonstrates so clearly in his new novel, school life (particularly in America) is just as fraught with danger, violence, and sudden traps as any unexplored jungle. Tim Hazard (the hero as well as the title of the book) is, one is sure, a typical enough youth, over-sensitive perhaps, gifted in a quiet way, kindly and likeable; he plays games, goes through



school, falls innocently in love, likes music (Debussy and Ravel, of course) and reads poetry. He has an ordinary family life and a "black sheep" of a brother who runs away from home. But what makes this novel so different from the usual sagas of its kind is the skill with which the author makes a stranger to America aware of two puzzling facets of the American character: emotional immaturity and the cult for toughness. Tim plays games ferociously; he gets tough outside; but within he is a soft muddle, a soured Chopin nocturne; and the careful way this development is revealed is fascinating. *Tim Hazard* is definitely not another American success story; Mr. Clark has daringly made it end sadly.

R. K.

An Envious Life

To have experienced the best of feudalism is a privilege rare in our generation. Mr. C. J. Lambert had the luck to inherit a Chilean farm of forty thousand acres, and in *Sweet Waters* he describes how he and his wife lived there from 1919 until recently. Some of its fields were five hundred acres. Fifty miles from Santiago, it looked on to the Andes, whose snow waters had been tapped through a canal to supply a complex net of irrigation. Fifteen hundred people, of Indian stock crossed with Spanish, were happily supported by this prosperous, self-contained unit; they were mostly illiterate, but their skill with a horse was uncanny and their craftsmanship a delight. To them the Lamberts were not so much employers as semi-divine parents. Written very naturally with a ripe turn of humour, this book gives an excellent idea of the joys and

drawbacks of such a position, and its accounts of magnificent shooting—quail, duck, pigeon, and (with a '22!) eagle—will make sportsmen groan.

E. O. D. K.

The Troublesome Lieutenant

After three years on the Russian Front Lieutenant Strick was posted in 1944 to the garrison town of Rehhausen near Würzburg where the officers soon became convinced that *The Lieutenant Must be Mad*. For Strick had lost not only the manners proper to a German officer but, what was more annoying, the comradeship that made a man remain silent about graft and loot. Yet Strick's "madness" had method in it, as they learnt to their cost, though the arid idealism inspiring it eventually brought about his downfall. Indeed, one cannot but sympathize with his brother officer's exasperated outburst: "My God, man, can't you ever relax?" Mr. Hellmut Kirst's satirically realistic story of life in Germany on the eve of defeat (translated ably by Richard and Clara Winston) might itself have been still better reading if he too had relaxed now and then. Nevertheless this unremitting tension and Mr. Kirst's taut style unquestionably reproduce faithfully the nervous atmosphere in the German Army immediately preceding the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life.

I. D. F. M.

Books Reviewed Above

Anywhere Else. H. J. Kaplan. (Secker and Warburg, 12/6)
Harbury Shore. Norman Mailer. (Cape, 12/6)
In the Money. Robert Wellerby. (Arthur Barker, 9/6)
Cast a Cold Eye. Mary McCarthy. (Heinemann, 9/6)
John Evelyn and Mrs. Godolphin. W. G. Hiscock. (Macmillan, 20/-)
It's an Old Scottish Custom. Neil McCallum. (Dobson, 10/6)
Letters of Richard Wagner: The Burrell Collection. Edited by John N. Burk. (Gollancz, 42/-)
Tim Hazard. Walter Van Tilburg Clark. (William Kimber, 12/6)
Sweet Waters. C. J. Lambert. (Chatto and Windus, 15/-)
The Lieutenant Must be Mad. Hellmut Kirst. (Harrap, 12/6)

Other Recommended Books

Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle of the Forties. Edmund Wilson. (W. H. Allen, 15/-) Sixty-seven of a great American critic's literary articles published in the *New Yorker* and elsewhere during the nineteen-forties. The range is wide—from Kafka and Sartre to a ribald dissection of a best-seller, from Johnson to Joyce, from Thackeray to Louis Bromfield. Lively, learned, intensely stimulating to read, and with that rarity in books of this kind, a full index.

Sailing Barges. Frank G. G. Carr. (Peter Davies, 30/-) Those for whom the big brown sails of our tidal estuaries are something more than a picturesque blob on the landscape will find this informative and beautifully illustrated survey laden with treasure.

The Dam. Richard Hunter. (Constable, 12/6) Nationalists, Communists and Allied Relief in China in 1937. Very well-built documentary novel, showing knowledge, tolerance and a generous anger. The cause of the writing does not conceal the immensity of the tragedy.

Draw the Curtain Close. Thomas B. Dewey. (Andrew Dakers, 8/6) Cheery hellbrew of cops, dames, gats and slugging. Another imitation Chandler but much more successful than usual. Private eye frequently blacked; final holocaust satisfyingly thorough; heroine has what it takes but hero does not take what she has. Author apparently on side of morality. Great fun while it lasts.



ON PRIORITY

"BRING me," said the voice of the office manager unemotionally through the house telephone, "the correspondence on Camshaft and Throttlebody."

"The Camshaft and Throttlebody correspondence," I confirmed; and added impressively: "Right away."

"Now then," he began, thumbing steadily through letters yellowing a little at the edges, "what's the position?"

"Well . . ." I said.

"Ah—here we are. Their order dated 15th January 1951 calls for five hundred banjo unions with bolts, and can they have these goods by return delivery."

I refreshed my memory over his shoulder.

"I wrote," I showed him, "on the 21st January 1951, thanking them for their esteemed order and assuring their good selves of our close co-operation at all times."

"Good. And then?"

"Well . . ." and I hesitated a moment. "The fact is, there was a slight slip up then. I mean, the repairs department thought the order was for *repairs* to five hundred banjo unions with bolts, and rather sat back until the stuff should arrive."

"But didn't they *do* something? Why didn't they . . .?"

I found a postcard. "But they did, sir. They sent this card saying that owing to shortage of staff the banjos would not be ready for dispatch for another fourteen to sixteen weeks."

"Am I to understand," and the office manager spoke slowly and heavily, "that the repairs department promised to send something back which, in fact, they had not received?"

"Well, not exactly. You see, it's the practice . . ."

"Here's another letter from Camshafts, dated 19th March 1951, referring to their order 00011, and asking if we had got over the influenza epidemic, and apologizing for any trouble caused. Did we have

an influenza epidemic in March 1951?"

"As far as I remember, Mr. Dawson was off with a bad cold for a week, and the works manager thought it would be a good idea to have a circular letter sent out—here's a copy here—saying that owing to the incidence of influenza among our staff, it is very much regretted that schedules have got rather behindhand."

"Behindhand! Behindhand!"

"I fancy, sir, that it means that a backlog developed about then."

"Oh. Well, go on."

"Their next letter—here it is—is dated 25th July last, and they say they have five hundred engines on the assembly lines complete except for the banjo unions and bolts, and could they trouble us, and thanking us for our usual prompt attention, etc."

"Surely we replied to that?"

"We did indeed, sir. I wrote myself. There—1st August:

"We very much regret the long delay in the dispatch of the goods against your order No. 00011 dated 15th January 1951. We are now putting this order on priority. But in fairness to ourselves we must point out that the demands of the rearmament programme on our resources preclude . . ."

"All right. What next?"

I flipped through the next two or three letters rather hurriedly, but not quickly enough.

"Hold on—what's that one?" The businesslike finger stubbed a very official-looking missive. He tore it from the file and began to read it aloud:

"In reply to your communication dated 1st August 1951, we would point out that the order under reference, No. 00011, covers

materials required for Armoured Fighting Vehicles. We have decided, therefore, while noting that you have been good enough to put this order on priority, to raise a new order for banjo unions *less* bolts for these vehicles. A number of bolts, surplus to requirements in 1943, has been discovered here, and our people say that if these bolts are polished, they can be fitted to unions. We now enclose Order No. 00012 and



trust that this order will have the same immediate attention that has characterized our previous dealings. Well? What's the position now?"

I drew a deep breath. "In October a new file was opened, and the order for five hundred banjo unions *less* bolts was put on priority."

"Splendid. Right. Now write them again on these lines. Er—your favoured letter to hand. Um—owing to the disastrous shortages of raw materials necessary for the work involved, we regret that it will be another fourteen to sixteen weeks before the parts covered by your Order No. 00012 can be dispatched to your good selves, etc."

"Since you say you no longer require the five hundred banjo unions with bolts, we are reluctantly cancelling Order No. 00011 . . ."

FERGUSSON MACLAY

8 8

Hardy Annual

"From such a ghastly tour, who could return, save to mingle his conscience with the will to build better things and to say with Tiger Tim: 'God bless us, every one'!"—*East African Standard*

MY HAIRDRESSER

MY hairdresser gives you quite a start,
He is so like something in Child Art
With his glorious gamboge-coloured hair
Darting out here, there and everywhere
In an antic hay
Kind of way;
But then, for that matter, I look a pretty good ninny
In a powder-blue pinny;
It is a mistake
To imagine that people ought to be like what they make.
You never find an author who looks
Like anyone in his books;
The trousers of top-notch tailors frequently hang
As if they had been romped in by an orang-outang.
In spite of his flibbertigibbety,
Statue of Liberty,
Highly unpromising exterior
My hairdresser has no superior,
And as for me,
I am his staunchest hairdressee.
His scissor and comb control is such a miracle
That the mere thought of it makes me lyrical.
Could Land of Hope and Glory sound more gripping
Than does the silken cadence of his snipping?

And did young Whatsisname and Chloë woo
With quite the fervour of his wet shampoo,
Or Margot Fonteyn in her bedroom slippers
Move with the magic softness of his clippers?
O that I might compose a panegyric
To match his cunning! (This concludes my lyric.)
Sometimes I get so carried apart
By his art
That when I am in the throes
He could easily, if he chose,
Sell me all the knobby walking-sticks in his rack
Or carve his initials in my bristles at the back;
And as it is I never can resist
Working my way serenely through his list.
I revel in his sprays
And violet rays;
I dote upon his diction
And I wallow in his friction
And I rave, I simply rave,
About his shave.
His finger-waves and facials really are
Just about the only items that I bar.
What a pity that it is not all equally exhilarating
For the unfortunate people who are waiting.

DANIEL PETTWARD



"Can I be of any further assistance, Madam?"

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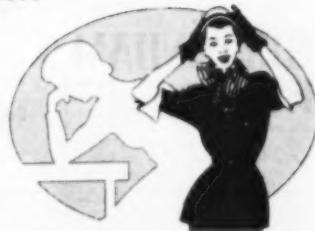


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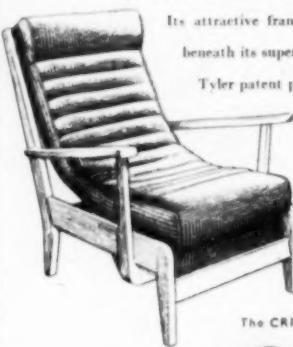
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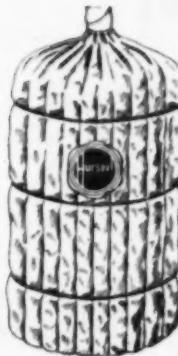


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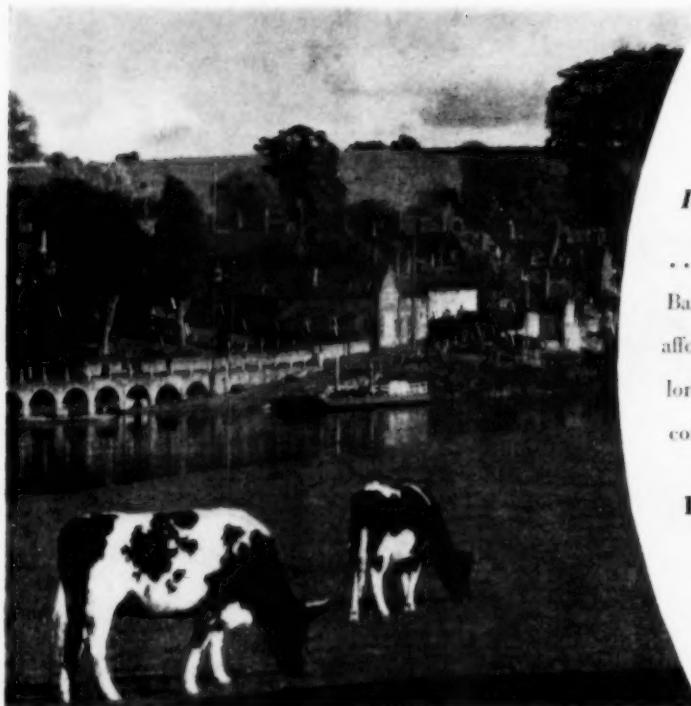
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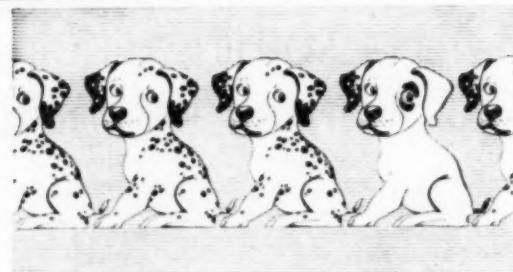
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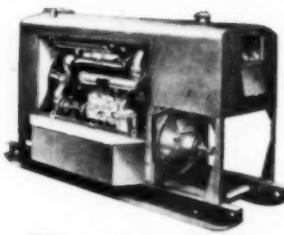


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